

REMARKS

Claims 1-7 and 14-20 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claim 1 is amended, withdrawn claims 8-13 are canceled without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter recited therein, and claims 14-20 are added. Support for the amendment to independent claim 1 and for new independent claim 14 can be found throughout the specification and specifically, for example, on page 5 at paragraph [0038] and on page 6 at paragraphs [0039] to [0041]. Support for new claims 15-20 can be found at least in original claims 2-7. No new matter is added. Applicant reserves the right to file a divisional application to pursue the subject matter of the canceled claims. Reconsideration of this application is requested in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

The courtesies extended to Applicant's representative by Examiner Fuller in the telephone interview held May 22, 2007 are appreciated. The reasons presented at the interview as warranting favorable action are incorporated into the remarks below and constitute Applicant's record of the interview.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-7 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over Nishi (U.S. Patent No. 6,462,807 B1). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

As tentatively agreed during the interview, Nishi fails to disclose or suggest an aligner having a range-finding optical system that adjusts the distance between a hologram recording surface and a photosensitive film surface, as recited in independent claim 1.

Nishi discloses an alignment system for (1) detecting reference marks on a photosensitive substrate, and (2) detecting the position of the substrate in the X-Y plane using an interferometer. However, Nishi does not disclose a range-finding optical system for measuring the distance between a hologram recording surface and a photosensitive film surface, as recited in amended independent claim 1. For at least this reason, Applicant

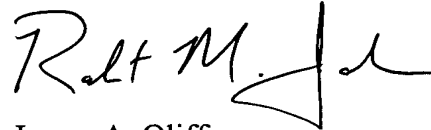
respectfully submits that amended independent claim 1 is patentable over Nishi. Thus, the rejection of claim 1, as well as claims 2-7 which depend from claim 1, should be withdrawn.

Applicant has added new independent claim 14. This claim recites an aligner having a film-thickness measuring optical system that measures a thickness of the photosensitive film. Nishi does not disclose or suggest an alignment system with this feature. Applicant respectfully submits that new independent claim 14 is patentable over Nishi, and should be allowed. Applicant respectfully submits that new dependent claims 15-20 should be allowed based at least on the dependence of each of these claims to patentable independent claim 14, as well as on the additional features recited by dependent claims 15-20.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of the pending claims (i.e., claims 1-7 and 14-20) are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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